UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/202
24 February 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN ANGOLA (MONUA)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request of the Security Council in its presidential statement of 21 January (S/PRST/1999/3), in which the Council, inter alia, requested me to report to it on consultations with the Government of Angola on a continued multidisciplinary presence of the United Nations. It covers developments since my last report of 17 January 1999 (S/1999/49) until 23 February 1999.

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

2. The situation in Angola remains grave, with heavy fighting continuing to rage in several parts of the country. Deep animosity and distrust have persisted between the Government of Angola and the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) led by Mr. Jonas Savimbi.

3. On 27 January 1999, the National Assembly of Angola adopted several resolutions, in one of which it accused the international community of complacency, acquiescence and bias and of making it easy for Mr. Savimbi to rearm and prepare for war. The Assembly also reiterated its view that the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) should be ended. In another resolution, the Assembly declared Mr. Savimbi a war criminal and international terrorist and called for his and his collaborators' arrest and prosecution and stressed the need to achieve total annihilation of the subversion headed by Mr. Savimbi. These resolutions were adopted unanimously, with those UNITA deputies present voting in favour.

4. On 18 February, the Chief State Prosecutor of Angola indicated that Mr. Savimbi would be charged with war crimes and that proceedings against him would start soon.

5. On 29 January, the President of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos, appointed a new cabinet and temporarily assumed the functions of Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Speaking at this occasion, the President stated that the measure would enable his Government to deal more

effectively with the war effort against UNITA and the dire socio-economic situation in Angola. At the inaugural ceremony of the new Government, which included new ministers of defence, interior and foreign affairs, the President stated that Angola had to wage war to achieve peace.

6. The Secretary-General of the Movimento Popular da Libertação de Angola (MPLA), Mr. Lourenco, said on 8 February that the second round of the presidential elections, which had been delayed since 1995, would be put off again in view of the renewed fighting. Subsequently, on 18 February, the Government of Angola and the UNITA Restoration Committee (UNITA-Renovada), which was established in Luanda in September 1998, held a joint meeting in Luanda to review the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex). It was agreed that the presidential elections, required under the terms of the Lusaka Protocol, would be cancelled.

7. UNITA-Renovada held its congress in Luanda from 11 to 14 January 1999, and elected Mr. Manuvakola as its new President. The Congress reaffirmed its commitment to the Lusaka Protocol and declared the intention of UNITA-Renovada to help implement all of its provisions. The newly elected President called on the United Nations to reformulate its policy on Angola. On 2 February, the National Assembly suspended the five UNITA deputies, who were arrested during the first half of January for their alleged collusion with Mr. Savimbi, thereby lifting their immunity. According to reports, the families of these deputies and their lawyers have not been allowed to visit them and the families experienced difficulties in providing them with food. Several UNITA deputies have also expressed fear for their lives after MONUA's expected withdrawal from Angola.

8. On 3 February, the Standing Committee of the Political Commission of UNITA issued a statement from Bailundo expressing serious disagreement with the assessment of the three Observer States (Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America) regarding the current situation in Angola. UNITA laid the blame for the current crisis on the Government and, in particular, President dos Santos who, it claimed, had openly declared war on UNITA. The UNITA leadership also claimed that it believed in dialogue and consultations on the basis of a new and realistic platform.

9. On 4 February, the new Angolan Minister of Defence, Mr. Paihama, warned neighbouring countries that had allegedly provided Mr. Savimbi with material and logistical support, that Angola reserved the right of retaliation and hot pursuit. The Government named seven African States which, it claimed, had links with Mr. Savimbi. One of these countries, Zambia, has publicly denied these allegations and requested that international organizations verify Angola's claims. The Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations has informed the Security Council of his Government's position in this regard in a letter dated 18 February addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/182).

10. Also on 3 February, my Special Representative, Issa B. Y. Diallo, who continued to make every effort to maintain contacts with all parties concerned, received a telephone call from the Secretary-General of UNITA, Mr. Gato, who complained of attempts to sideline his organization, citing as an example the

Security Council's presidential statement of 21 January. He also complained that humanitarian assistance was not reaching people in UNITA-controlled areas.

11. In a letter addressed to me dated 18 February 1999, Mr. Savimbi claimed, inter alia, that the war was the sole and exclusive responsibility of the Government of Angola. According to the letter, the UNITA leadership maintained its position that the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola should continue in its original format as a useful witness and as a facilitator of a rapprochement between the parties. Mr. Savimbi also stated that the current conflict could never be resolved by military means.

12. On 18 February, my Special Representative briefed the Security Council on the situation in Angola and on the status of his consultations with the Angolan authorities concerning the future presence of the United Nations in Angola. On 22 February, the Vice-Minister of Territorial Administration of Angola, General Higino Carneiro, provided a briefing to Security Council members under the "Arria formula".

III. MILITARY SITUATION

13. There has been a marked escalation in fighting between Government and UNITA forces. On 26 January 1999, UNITA launched an unexpected offensive in Zaire province and captured M'Banza Congo on 26 January, threatening the Soyo oil fields on the western coast. Its troops were reported to have advanced to Tomboco where they are engaged in heavy combat with the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA). Since then, the Government has reportedly reinforced areas surrounding Soyo and Tomboco and took over M'Banza Congo on 12 February 1999. However, some reports indicate that UNITA captured the town of Maquela de Zombo in Uige province.

14. In the central highlands, FAA is reported to have made substantial gains. It captured Catabola and N'harea (30 kilometres east of Andulo) around 30 January 1999, as well as several other areas around Andulo, in an apparent bid to isolate that UNITA stronghold. UNITA forces reportedly blew up two vital bridges on the road to Andulo to block the Government's offensive. UNITA forces have briefly captured Chitembo, thus threatening the town of Kuito from the south. Kuito itself appears to be secure, with FAA flights and limited road convoys arriving regularly from Huambo. Renewed fighting was reported near Huambo, with artillery duels around Vila Nova, Bela Vista and Chipipa. The frontline in those areas now appears to have stabilized. UNITA troops continue to control areas north and south of Huambo. Nevertheless, the road Huambo-Caala-Lobito remains open to traffic.

15. UNITA forces continued to shell the town of Malange intermittently and also captured Capenda hydroelectric project about 50 kilometres south-west of Malange town around 30 January 1999. There have been large numbers of civilian casualties in the town, which is overwhelmed by the influx of almost 100,000 internally displaced persons. Government sources reported that FAA forces have taken Cagandala and are advancing towards Caribo, both in Malanje province. Tensions have also been building up around the Luzamba diamond mines, in Andrada and Dundo (Lunda Norte province) along the border with the Democratic Republic

of the Congo, as well as in northern Huila province. On 9 February, UNITA announced that its forces had captured two diamond mines in the north-east part of the country and killed 19 foreigners. The country is also rife with rumours of the induction of a large number of foreign troops, by both sides. The presence of Congolese troops, who are reportedly undergoing training with FAA, has been confirmed in the Lubango and Matala areas. However, there has been no concrete confirmation of the presence of other foreign troops.

IV. SECURITY OF UNITED NATIONS PERSONNEL

16. On 1 February 1999, in a tragic incident in Huambo, two elements of the Angolan National Police (ANP) fatally stabbed a member of the Namibian contingent of MONUA. The matter has been vigorously pursued with the local ANP and government authorities in Huambo and Luanda and the culprits have since been arrested. The Angolan authorities have promised to conduct a thorough investigation into the incident and take appropriate action against the perpetrators of this crime. In another incident in Huambo on 3 February, elements of ANP, presumably intoxicated, fired two rounds towards the camp of the Namibian contingent in Huambo. One of the bullets landed on the floor where Namibian soldiers were sleeping.

17. There were two mine incidents while the Namibian military task force was being relocated by road from Huambo to Lubango. On 6 February 1999, a contingent tractor detonated an anti-tank mine near Tchindjinje airstrip. Fortunately, there were no injuries. On 9 February, while the Namibia convoy was 16 kilometres from the town of Quilengues, an armoured personnel carrier hit another anti-tank mine and was seriously damaged. As a result, one United Nations soldier suffered minor injuries.

18. After extensive negotiations, on 25 January 1999 a United Nations investigation team, with an escort from UNITA, reached the site of the crash of United Nations flight 806A, which went down on 2 January. The site was located 20 miles north-east of the city of Huambo. Owing to the difficulty of reaching the site by road, the team had a little over an hour at that location. Based on preliminary observations of the team, it would appear that the aircraft was attempting to make an emergency landing when major sections of the aircraft started to come apart and it fell out of control. It would further appear that the aircraft had been on fire and continued to burn after impact. Both the cockpit voice and flight data recorders had been removed from the aircraft and could not be found. Some aircraft parts were strewn across a radius of 300 metres. There were numerous bullet holes in the tail section of the aircraft, which fell off on a nearby hill. It is highly unlikely that any of the passengers and crew members could have survived the crash, since the portion of the aircraft that had carried the passengers and the crew was totally destroyed. Very few human remains have been recovered.

19. Efforts to revisit the crash site of the first aircraft near Vila Nova have not succeeded so far, owing to the prevailing insecurity in the area. Although the MONUA office in Huambo has been relocated to Luanda, MONUA continues to maintain close contacts with the Government and FAA authorities with a view to arranging a second visit. The United Nations, both in the field and at

Headquarters, will continue to persist in gaining access to both sites, in order to conduct the necessary investigation and, to this end, urges the parties to extend their full cooperation.

V. HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS

20. The escalation of hostilities in Malange, Uige and Zaire provinces and the continued fighting in Huambo and Bie provinces have further contributed to the dramatic deterioration in the human rights situation. The civilian population is bearing the full brunt of the warfare. Indiscriminate shelling of the town of Malange by UNITA, in clear violation of the Geneva Conventions, killed at least several dozen persons between 4 and 8 January 1999 and injured numerous others. Shells fired in broad daylight caused the greatest loss of civilian life when they fell in three busy market places and residential areas, apparently in an attempt to terrorize the population. The fate of non-combatants or wounded soldiers remains unclear, particularly since requests for access to prisoners of war have yet to be granted by both sides.

21. The increase in the number of abuses committed against members of the Roman Catholic Church in the last year is of grave concern, with mission property and personnel being targeted for harassment, ill-treatment and killings or attempted killings. In early January 1999, Father Albino Sawaku and two catechists in Huambo province were reportedly shot dead by six unidentified men allegedly belonging to UNITA. The priest's body was later mutilated with machetes in front of witnesses. Protestant churches have also not escaped abuses, particularly from government elements, as was the case in Cuanza Sul and eastern Uige, where such churches might have been seen as being more sympathetic to UNITA.

22. In the present climate of war, freedom of expression has come under pressure. In January 1999, two journalists of a privately owned radio station in Benguela were arbitrarily detained by police, interrogated but then released without charge, over the retransmission of a radio report quoting UNITA. Such incidents have discouraged the public from participating in the radio station's "phone-in" programme which used to include criticisms of the authorities.

23. Despite the armed conflict, the Government has continued its welcome cooperation with MONUA in the area of capacity-building aimed at strengthening the rule of law. The serious overcrowding of the Viana prison in Luanda has highlighted the chronic lack of resources facing the Angolan judicial system and the resulting conditions which have fallen below international minimum standards. Over a thousand detainees in Viana - of whom nearly 90 per cent are awaiting trial - are housed in a building meant for half that number. In collaboration with government authorities, MONUA has initiated projects to address these issues.

VI. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

24. The humanitarian situation in Angola has shown no sign of improvement. Indeed, all indications point to a further deterioration of the condition of vulnerable populations over the coming months. The situation has attained

devastating proportions, and could be compared with the humanitarian catastrophe in Angola during the fighting in 1993 and 1994.

25. The effects of the conflict have led to further displacements of the civilian population during the month of February, with the total number of confirmed internally displaced persons now having reached over 550,000 persons. Moreover, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that 19,000 Angolan refugees have recently arrived in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, fleeing the recent fighting in Uige and Zaire provinces. Also among the immediate consequences of the war are the higher level of malnutrition, especially among young children, and the dismal sanitation and health conditions which are seriously increasing the risk of epidemics. In some areas of the country, there are reports of outbreaks of tuberculosis. The situation has become considerably worse owing to the serious overcrowding in many of the camps and other locations where internally displaced persons are sheltered.

26. In spite of the deteriorating security situation, United Nations agencies and programmes resumed their air operations to most provincial capitals in mid-January 1999. Food and medicine stocks have been replenished to contend with possible supply constraints. However, owing to the prevailing insecurity and harassment by some local security forces, which has often included confiscation of equipment, the humanitarian community is still maintaining a reduced presence in most provincial capitals. This is seriously hampering the normal conduct of humanitarian operations, in particular food distribution and health-related projects. At present only emergency projects are being undertaken. The delivery of relief items under current circumstances, and in the foreseeable future, will entail a significant cost increase, since almost all deliveries would have to be conducted by air.

27. The fighting in the country and the withdrawal of international personnel from the provinces have seriously hampered the United Nations mine action programme in Angola. At the same time, all efforts are made to keep the programme operational through assisting Angola in building national capacity for mine clearance and through the promotion of mine awareness.

28. The ability of the humanitarian community to operate in Angola has been seriously affected by the constraints on access, including to UNITA-controlled areas and other areas of conflict where the population might be suffering. It is assumed that the needs of these groups could surpass those to which the humanitarian community already has access. In the prevailing situation, the humanitarian principles of unrestricted access to affected populations, independent assessment and monitoring, and safety and security of humanitarian personnel, are not being realized. In order to achieve these objectives, a clear and unequivocal commitment to respect the provisions of international humanitarian law is necessary on the part of all concerned.

29. As indicated in my previous report (S/1999/49), in the prevailing circumstances humanitarian organizations will have to strengthen their presence in Angola, put in place enhanced communication networks and take additional security measures. Bearing in mind the increased requirements of carrying out humanitarian operations in exceedingly difficult conditions, I would like to

appeal once again to the generosity of donors to fund fully and urgently the 1999 United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Angola. A number of agencies have already reviewed their requirements for 1999 and a meeting with donors to review the Appeal is to be held in Geneva in March 1999.

VII. DRAWDOWN OF MONUA AND ITS LIQUIDATION PHASE

30. The relocation of United Nations personnel and equipment has proceeded smoothly and, generally, according to the existing plans, despite the shortages of air assets at MONUA's disposal. All United Nations team sites and regional headquarters were relocated to Luanda by 23 February.

31. Since the beginning of 1999, a total of 325 MONUA military and civilian police observers have been repatriated. With regard to the formed units, the Namibian contingent was repatriated on 22 February, while the Portuguese signal unit is expected to leave Angola by the end of February 1999. The Russian helicopter unit is scheduled to depart soon after the expiration of MONUA's mandate.

32. It was initially envisaged that up to 200 personnel, to be drawn from infantry units currently serving with MONUA, would form the security detachment that would remain temporarily in Luanda to protect United Nations property during the liquidation phase following the expiration of MONUA's mandate on 26 February. As a result of further review, it is now estimated that up to 260 troops will be required to provide the necessary protection. The Secretariat is continuing its consultations with troop-contributing countries and is also exploring other options for the security of MONUA during the liquidation phase. I also trust that the Government of Angola, in accordance with the Status of Mission Agreement, will continue to ensure the security and safety of United Nations personnel in Angola.

33. The technical liquidation of MONUA and its predecessors, whose combined presence in Angola spans a period of almost 10 years, presents a significant challenge to the Organization. This task, which may take over six months to complete, will demand the presence in Angola of a substantial number of administrative, logistical and other personnel, as well as a small medical unit. In addition, it will require the retaining, for a period of up to two to three months after the mandate ends, of about 30 staff officers and a dozen police officers who would assist in the liquidation. Most of the remaining military, police and civilian personnel would be repatriated by the end of March 1999.

VIII. OBSERVATIONS

34. Following the presidential statement of 21 January (S/PRST/1999/3) in which the Security Council expressed itself to be in favour of a continued multidisciplinary presence of the United Nations in Angola, I instructed my Special Representative to enter urgently into consultations with the Angolan Government. Subsequently, through a note verbale dated 27 January 1999, the Government informed my Special Representative that, in its view, a continued multidisciplinary presence of the United Nations in Angola was not necessary.

In the same communication, the Government expressed the view that the United Nations should continue its activities through the specialized agencies, under the coordination of the United Nations Development Programme.

35. This notwithstanding and pursuant to the 21 February presidential statement, I wrote a letter to President dos Santos on 1 February, soliciting his personal views on the matter so that these could be conveyed to the Council. Mr. Diallo delivered this letter during an audience with the President on 9 February 1999. In his reply (S/1999/166), dated 11 February, President dos Santos indicated that his Government would continue to deal with representatives of United Nations agencies and programmes on issues related to humanitarian assistance, human rights and other matters of interest to the people of Angola. As for MONUA, the Government considered that conditions for maintaining a MONUA presence had ceased to exist. In his letter, President dos Santos further emphasized that his Government was not opposed to the appointment of a representative of the Secretary-General who, from New York, could maintain contact with the Government of Angola in monitoring the evolution of the situation in the country.

36. I intend to continue consultations with the Government of Angola concerning the modalities of the future presence of the United Nations and will inform the Security Council in due course of the outcome of these consultations.

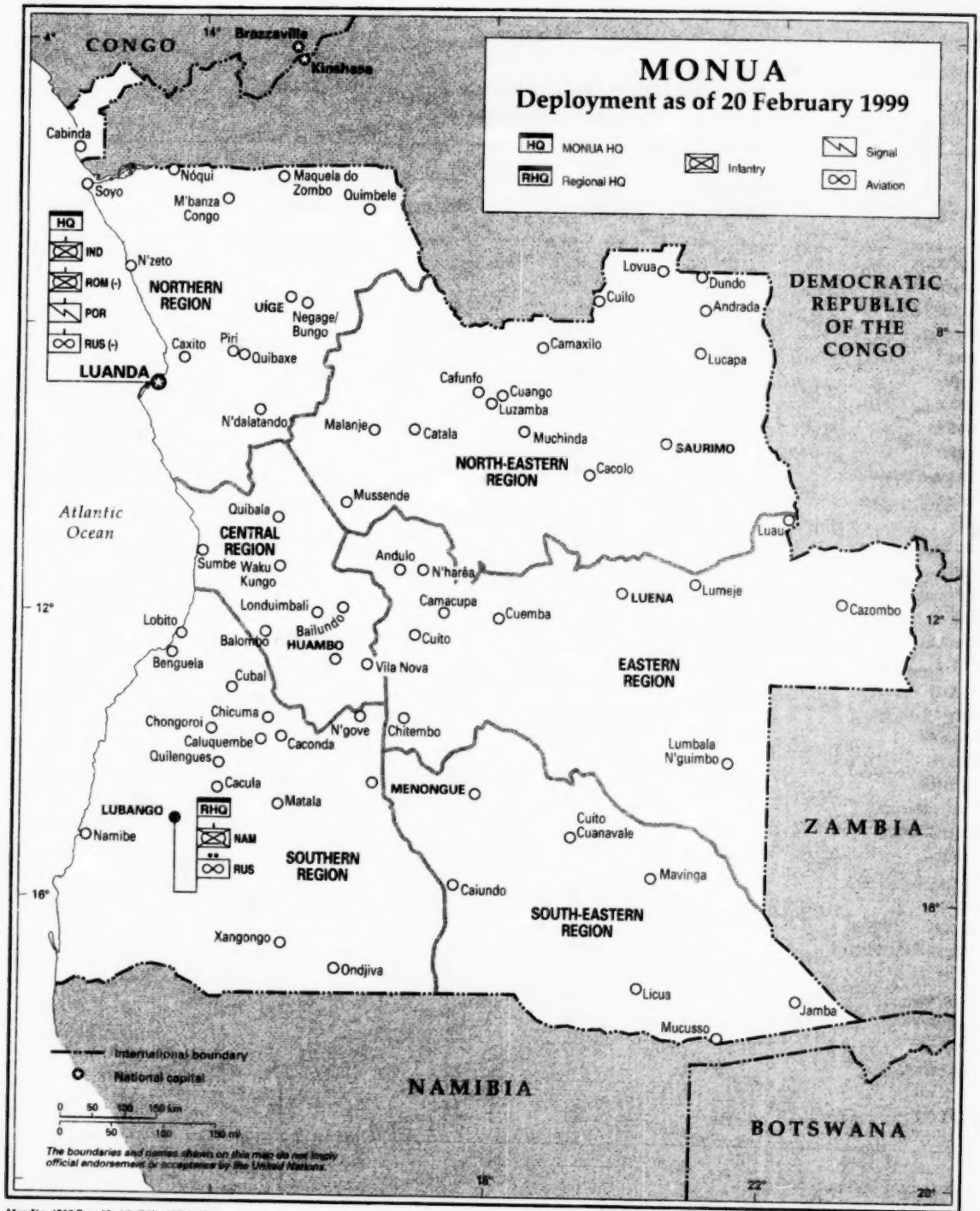
37. In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to my Special Representative, to the Force Commander and to all military, police and civilian personnel of MONUA, as well as to humanitarian workers and representatives of non-governmental organizations, for the courageous and dedicated way in which they have been carrying out their duties in the dangerous situation prevailing in Angola. They, as well as their colleagues who served with MONUA's predecessors, can and should take pride in their efforts to help the Angolans to finally achieve lasting peace and national reconciliation. These goals should continue to guide the future presence of the United Nations in this country.

ANNEX

The United Nations Observer Mission in Angola: contributions as at 20 February 1999

Country	Military Observers	Civilian Police Observers	Staff Officers [a]	Troops	
Argentina	--	2	--	--	2
Bangladesh	2	1	--	--	3
Brazil	--	2	2	--	4
Bulgaria	1	1	--	--	2
Congo	1	--	--	--	1
Egypt	2	4	--	--	6
France	1	--	--	--	1
Gambia	--	1	--	--	1
Ghana	3	2	--	--	5
Guinea-Bissau	2	4	--	--	6
Hungary	1	1	--	--	2
India	5	2	3	138	148
Jordan	1	2	--	--	3
Kenya	1	--	--	--	1
Malaysia	1	4	--	--	5
Mali	--	1	--	--	1
Namibia	--	--	--	131	131
New Zealand	--	--	--	--	--
Nigeria	2	3	--	--	5
Norway	1	--	--	--	1
Pakistan	3	--	1 [b]	--	4
Poland	2	--	--	--	2
Portugal	1	7	3	40	51
Romania	--	--	--	138	138
Russian Federation	3	--	--	99	99
Senegal	2	--	--	--	2
Slovakia	3	--	--	--	3
Spain	--	2	--	--	2
Sweden	--	3	--	--	3
United Republic of Tanzania	--	1	--	--	1
Ukraine	--	--	--	--	--
Uruguay	2	6	1	--	9
Zambia	1	2	4	--	7
Zimbabwe	--	3	2	--	5
TOTAL	38	54	16	546	654

a/ Including military police.
b/ A military specialist in the demining school.



Map No. 4016 Rev. 12 UNITED NATIONS
February 1999

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